

GENESIS 1-3
Message 12

INTRO: I'd like you to take your Bibles and turn to Genesis 1:26 (read). I have been seeking to show the distinctions between man and animals. I want to do that with regard to man and God as well. This past week I read an article on genetic engineering. In the future I want to cover at least some of that. There is talk of cloning pigs and people and producing blood for the blood bank using such genetics. Some scary things are happening. I trust you will not get tired of my pointing out the distinctions between man and animals and man and God.

1. The creation of man (1:26-31)

Genesis 1:26. On day six of creation week God created the land animals and man. That is what we are looking at this morning. Now Genesis chapter 2 goes over some of the same as Genesis one. And Genesis 1 is something like our modern newscast which tells us, Here are the headlines and now here are the details. Genesis 2 gives the details. Genesis 1:26-27 gives us the headlines of the creation of man.

We want to look first at the creation of man. Who created man? Notice in our text these words, "Let US make man in OUR image." The pronoun us is the objective form of the pronoun we. Now up until about 200 years ago or so, this plural has been spoken of by theologians as referring to the Trinity to indicate that there are more Persons in the godhead than one. Let US make man in our image. In modern times however, another explanation is given for these plural pronouns. It is called the plural of majesty. Ryrie's study Bible for instance, says these are plurals of majesty. Now the question is, is it a plural of majesty or a plural of person? And so up until the last 200 years or so, it has been viewed as a plural of persons, but now it is referred to by Evangelical teachers as referring to the plural of majesty.

You see we studied in Genesis 1:1 the word Elohim. This occurs 26 times in the rest of this chapter. The im at the end of Elohim is like putting an s on the end of an English noun. Pulpit is singular, pulpits is plural. Book is singular, books is plural. Now a certain kind of angel is called in the Bible a Cherub. And if you want to say cherub in plural, you don't say cherubs, you say, cherubim. Elohim is a plural noun and so here we have the plural of majesty argued by some of our scholars.

Now I think there are no people who can more readily understand this plural of majesty than the Low German people. Because we also have a plural pronoun which I call the plural of respect. You may be familiar with it. Sure you are. When we speak to someone of our own age or someone of our own level, we refer to them as *du*. When we look up to somebody in respect or they are a lot older than we are then we refer to them as *ye*. Now when you have been trained in that, it grates on your ears to hear some young person speak to an older person using the pronoun *du*. The plural of respect is the concept some view this passage as. Let US make man in OUR image.

If you deal with Jehovah's Witnesses and you back here to Genesis and you say, "Look. The Bible says, 'Let US make man in OUR image.'" Do you know what they will say? He will take you back to these evangelical writers and say, "Ah ha. Look. It is a plural of majesty. That is just a plurality of majesty. It doesn't mean a plurality of beings." It is not that the JW's generated that teaching. They liked it because it suits their purpose. Now there are others who believe it is not the plural of majesty. It is the plural of persons. "Let US make man in OUR image." This is important.

Now this plural does not tell us how many Persons there are in the godhead. It does indicate that there is more than one person in the godhead. The teaching that there are three

persons in the godhead comes from the NT. Now it is not my purpose to expound on the teaching of the Trinity, which I believe is the Biblical Triune God. Our question is, "Who created man?" It seems from this verse that the Triune God is involved in creating man, "Let us make man in our image." Now these words also create another distinction between man and animal. A very, very important distinction. Probably the largest distinction between man and animal. Does a pig become a human being, when they clone a pig with a human being? We'll look at that in the future. Here is a very big distinction in the Scriptures, with regard to the difference between man and animal, man was created in the image of God.

We are left now to determine, "What is this likeness we have between man and God in this verse?" Our second question, who or what is man like? Well we will look first at the word "image." Shall we conclude like our secular friends, that because man and animal can move about on their own, therefore man and animal are different species of the same kind? Shall we conclude that with our secular friends? Far from it. On the other hand, since man is made in God's image and likeness, is he therefore a god? Far from it. Both are errors and must be avoided. I have sought in these messages to point out the distinctions between man and animal. Now note these distinctions between man and the rest of creation. God said, "Let US make man in OUR image." I believe that is the greatest distinction of all. But I ask you, "What does it mean that man was made in the image and likeness of God?"

Well, let's look first at the word image. It is the Hebrew word *tselem*. And it's the same word that is used for images of false gods. Image, whether it be false or true, is a representation of something which is supposed to have reality somewhere else. Now it is called a false image sometimes, because, maybe it is said to be Buddha's image. But does Buddha

have a reality over here? No. So it is a false image. Man is said to be made in the image of God. So there must be some area of representation between man and God. Man is some kind of representative of God in some area. The image I think refers to some essence that man is that God is. That is my understanding of it.

Now the Catechism does not seem to indicate a difference between image and likeness. I think there is. So in considering this word image, how then is man in the image of God? Well, it speaks of essence, and likeness speaks of something comparative. So man is essentially like God and he is comparatively like Him as well. By the way, I would encourage you to mark well these words. You will need them, especially our young people. Well, the idea of the image of God in man we cannot discuss fully this morning. The views are voluminous. But I want to give you one view of what the image of God in man is from our own Catechism, one held by many theologians. The question goes like this: Wherein does man's likeness to God consist? The answer: Man was created after God in righteousness and true holiness. Now that is held by many theologians.

I'd like you to turn to Ephesians 4:24 (read). This is the heaviest verse to support this view. Here is my question for you: If righteousness and true holiness is the image of God in man, did man lose the image when he sinned? Did man become unrighteous when he sinned? Did he become unholy? So he lost the image right? And that is my problem with this view. Now others including the school where I went say, "Oh, no, no, he did not lose the image of God. The image of God was marred, when man sinned." The new creation seeks to restore the image. But the Bible never tells me that the image was marred. Never tells me that man lost the image. I want us to go to a Scripture written long after the fall, Genesis 9. (read 9:5-6.) This is after the flood. This is what should be happening in our day. When

man kills man, his blood should be shed. You know why? When an animal kills man, that animal must be killed. Do you know why? Man is far above animal. There is such a distinction between man and animal. But here we read that man was in the image of God long after the fall. So I conclude that righteousness and holiness are not the image of God in man.

So the question is, in what way is man in the image of God? What is the image of God in man. Personhood. I've used the word personality but too many people get the word personality mixed up with what that means in this context. Personhood, or the fact that you are a person. When I teach the doctrine of man I have a chart that compares man angels and God. The student must point out the similarities and differences between man, angels, animals and God. And when you do this chart, my propositions in determining what the image of God in man is are these: Whatever the image of God in man is, it must be something that man has in common with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Do you know why? Because our text says, "Let us make man in our image."

Secondly, whatever the image of God in man is, it must be something that the animals do not have. And third and last, whatever the image of God in man is, it must be something man had before and after the fall. And righteousness and holiness do not fit into those propositions. What is it that man has in common with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit? And what is it that he has that he does not have in common with the animals, and that he had before the fall and after the fall. What is it? It is personhood. Man is a person. Animal is not a person. There are distinctions between man and animal and personhood is that distinction.

So we find the most significant difference between man and animal is that man is a person and animal is not. If you can give me a good

definition of personhood, I'll buy it. I'll pay a minimum of \$50 depending on how good it is. Now personhood is that which man has in common with God. By the way, when you are dealing with the cults, there is one area of difficulty you will find with regard to the Holy Spirit. God is a Person. Jesus Christ is a Person. But when we come to the Holy Spirit, then we have a battle. Very interesting things happen in the Greek NT. When the Greek NT has an article before the noun, that article always agrees with the noun in number, gender and case. When you come to the word spirit, this word in the Greek is neuter. When you come to the Holy Spirit you have a Person. The apostle John on several occasions breaks the Greek rule to stay true to theology. He puts a masculine article in front of a neuter noun. It shouldn't be done. But he does it to stay theologically correct. The Holy Spirit is a Person.

I went through the Catechism twice with my children. I taught them that the Holy Spirit is a Person not a thing. So I told them to remember that. the Holy Spirit is a Person, not a thing. The next time I taught through I asked, Is the Holy Spirit a Person or a thing. And they said, "A thing." No, the Holy Spirit is a Person, and so man has this in common with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Why is it wrong to kill one of mankind. It is not because he has flesh and bones like the animal has. It is because he is a person. I want to tell you something about persons. They have never ending existence. That is a major difference between man and animals. I was talking to a girl here some time ago. I said, "What will happen when you die?" She said, "I'll go down six feet." I said, "Oh no. What you have just described is the death of an animal." Man does not cease to exist. He will exist in some form, but he will exist. At death he goes to hell or to heaven, there is no other option. My friend, there is no purgatory either. That is why it is wrong to kill a person. I want to say also

that it is murder to do away with unborn babies. It is sad that it is necessary to say that in our community, but it is. Did you hear that young people? It is murder. Do I have to tell you that it is murder to do away with old people who cannot think any more. That is murder too. Thou shalt not kill, the Scripture says,

Well, the image of God in man. In my understanding the image of God in man is personhood. It is that which we have in common with God. What then is the likeness of God in man? It is not the same thing. There is a distinction between image and likeness. Image is something that we are that God is too. Likeness is how we are like God in various ways. The word like or likeness indicates both similarity and difference. Otherwise you don't have likeness. So we are like God in some ways and we are different in other ways.

So I want to zero in this morning on the differences between man and God. I do that for a very important purpose. When you have something that is like something there is also some point of difference. You can buy an IBM computer and then you can buy an IBM computer. And this IBM is not an IBM. It is like an IBM, but it is not a real IBM. It is a clone. It works like an IBM and has the language of an IBM, but it is not an IBM because IBM did not make it. You see, there is a point of similarity and a point of dissimilarity. It's like counterfeit money. Counterfeit money can be checked to see if it is real. Counterfeit money has a very large area of similarity otherwise you would never get away with it. But there is also dissimilarity, otherwise you could never tell it apart. It is comparative.

Now I have said earlier, that it is very important that we understand the difference between man and animal. It is also important that we understand the difference between man and God. That is becoming very important in our day. As I prepared for this message I

thought of how important this text is. And my heart went out to our young people. I may not see the future right. I do see a future. I do not see a bright future. As I envision things my generation and generations past had various enemies of the Gospel. We have known them as the cults. They use the Bible, or maybe I should say they misuse the Bible. And we have taken them one at a time. We have the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons and so on. We have various kinds of cults. And there are materials we can buy that will tell you what is wrong with them. But there is something happening in our day that is much larger than the cults. It is something that you and I may not face very much, but our young people will. This new religion is fashioned in a sense after the Triune God. That is a description of the Triune God. It is in that sense like democracy. Democracy can bring together various backgrounds and nationalities and unite them in diversity.

By the way I've read books of how communism would bring in the antichrist. Do you know what I read today? How democracy will bring in the antichrist. That is more accurate than communism in bringing in the antichrist. This new religion is both subtle and scary. It is a religion that has unity in diversity. This new religion which seems to me will be the last form of religion, has the ability to do what we would always have thought to be the unthinkable. I think this new religion will unite under one umbrella Mormons and JW's and Catholics, and Hindus and Budhists and other isms and unite them under one big umbrella. That's big. That's what I see in the future. I see I think, I see even Evangelicalism falling in the steps that will lead there. And I'm fearful, when I see our young people. Young people, when I observe, not all of you, by and large, when I observe your lack of enthusiasm for the Word of God, I fear for you. I see no match for the cults, never mind this new religion. But that's why I point out to you the difference between God and man. If you do

not have that you will be candidates for this new religion.

It is for this reason that it is very important that we understand the difference between man and God. If we do not understand the difference, we are prime candidates for this new religion. My friends it is so big and will be so irresistible, unless you are grounded in this book, you will not stand against it. The only blessing is that we have not been confronted with it, person to person yet. What is this new age movement? Well it is so large and so loosely interconnected that it is almost impossible to define. I would say that the one unifying factor is this, it's said by Shirley McClain. Here it is: "Man's one big problem is that you just don't know that you are God. That is your problem."

I wonder, young people, do you ever think you will believe something like that? You better ground yourself in this book. This is a movement that will take you if you don't. In light of this, look again at our text. Genesis 1:26 (read). I want to point out to us this morning what is probably one of the biggest differences between man and God. Let me make a very simple proposition this morning: God created man. Two nouns, one verb. A very simply grammatical observation this morning. When you have a subject noun, a verb and an object, you can never have the subject equal the object. Now the NAM would like to do away with that truth. You can't. Subject cannot equal object. What we have in that simple statement is an active verb. And when we have in Genesis, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth", that's what we have. An active verb. God does not equal the heaven and the earth. That does away with most of the isms right there. Not the cults but the isms.

One of the leaders of Mormonism, the one who followed Joseph Smith, Brigham Young; he gave this statement, "As man is God once was. As God is, man may become." He was ahead of his

day wasn't he? This is coming out in our day now. And I want to tell you this morning. You will never be god. It seems strange that it should be necessary to say that doesn't it. But it's absolutely crucial.

Well, there are other distinctions. We'll be looking at those as we move along. Let me just close in saying, on day six we have the creation of land animals and man, but we have conclusive evidence that there are differences between man and animal. A major difference is that man was created in the image and likeness of God Almighty Himself. And that is not true of animals. I have suggested to you that the significance of the words that man was created in the image of God is the fact that we are persons. That is a very, very major difference. Killing anyone of mankind is murder for that reason. I stress it again, whether it is pre-born or in old age, it is murder. Now likeness indicates similarity and dissimilarity. The first major dissimilarity is that God is the Creator and man is the created. That is such a major difference that you could never class yourself as God if you believe that. It's the belief that makes the difference. Belief is very powerful. I don't wonder any more that the Bible says whoever believes in Him will never die. Belief is so powerful. It makes all the difference in what we are and what we become. May god use these messages to secure you in light of what is coming.